

# News Release



For Immediate Release  
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## **2006 California State Parks Director's Recognition Awards Announced 27 Individuals Recognized, One May Live in Your Town**

**SACRAMENTO** – California State Parks Director Ruth Coleman announced today the recipients of the 2006 Director's Recognition Awards. The awards go to state park employees who have distinguished themselves for their extraordinary achievements.

"We want to recognize California's public servants at state parks who day in and day out go well beyond their job requirements," said State Parks Director Ruth Coleman. "It is this kind of dedication that has made California State Parks one of the finest park systems anywhere in the world."

The awards are presented once a year. The 27 were selected by the director from among nominations submitted to Sacramento headquarters by the department's 5,000 employees from across the state. Among them are individuals who identified a long-standing problem and found a creative solution; recognized a need and found a way to fill it against the odds; and built unity among diverse groups to reach common goals beyond expectations.

"I am proud to recognize these talented and innovative individuals at state parks," Coleman said.

The awards will be presented from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on June 4 in the Resources Agency Auditorium, at 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Sacramento.

### The Olmsted Award for Leadership and Vision

**Barry Breckling**, of Morgan Hill, Monterey District State Park Ranger

Ranger Breckling initiated and maintained the Henry W. Coe State Park uniformed volunteer program. The program began in 1980 with eight volunteers and today is 140 members strong. Volunteers lead hikes, work in the visitor center, build and maintain trails, and develop interpretive programs, books, and pamphlets.

Henry W. Coe State Park is 14 miles east of Morgan Hill.  
Monterey District - (831) 649-2836.

### The Hill Award for Inspiration

The Gaviota State Park Boat Hoist Team:

**Bob Byrnes**, of Nipomo, Volunteer Chairperson

**Jeff Chamberlain**, of Los Osos, volunteer

**Wes Chapin**, of Oak View, District Interpretive Specialist

**Al Fimlaid**, of Goleta, Lifeguard Supervisor (Team Leader)

**Tom Miller**, of Goleta, volunteer

**George Sorum**, of Lompoc, Seasonal Lifeguard II

**Dion von der Lieth**, of Buellton, Lifeguard (more)

The team was formed to keep the popular Gaviota State Park pier and public boat hoist operational. They secured a grant from the California Department of Boating and Waterways and in 2006 developed the *Gaviota State Park Boat Hoist Users Guide*. Over 350 boat owners and deck hands were trained in the proper use of the boat hoist, which is the only self-service facility of its kind between Santa Barbara and Avila Bay open seven-days a week.

Gaviota State Park is 33 miles west of Santa Barbara.

Channel Coast District - (805) 585-1847.

#### The Drury Award for Professional Integrity

**Jeff Bomke**, of Gasquet, Maintenance Chief, North Coast Redwoods District, Eureka

Since 1991 he has worked to create a lasting partnership between Redwood National and State Parks as well as with the Tolowa Tribe in the area. He has met with both national and state park scientists to determine alternative water sources to protect the Mill Creek campground resources. He meets regularly with the Tolowa Tribe to find solutions to both protect the area and maintain a campground at Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park near Crescent City.

North Coast Redwoods District - (707) 445-6547, X03.

#### The Mott Award for Innovation

**Joe von Herrmann**, of Sonoma, State Park Interpreter, Interpretation and Education Division, Sacramento

He is being recognized for his work on the Parks On-Line Resources for Teachers and Students (PORTS), the department's distance learning program. In 2006, this program of live park visits through video conferencing reached more than 12,000 students.

Interpretation and Education Division - (916) 654-2249.

#### The Dewitt Award for Partnership

**Ray Murray**, of San Francisco, Chief of Partnerships Programs, Pacific West Region, National Park Service

For nearly 15 years Murray has worked closely with both national and state parks to develop and implement a series of cooperative agreements that have resulted in improved communications, resource sharing, and enhanced recreational opportunities that cut across jurisdictional lines. As a result, both departments have saved funds, shared equipment, participated in joint natural and cultural resource projects, and produced several joint general plans. Additionally, for nearly 20 years Murray served as primary contact for the California Outdoor Recreation Plan. The plan has shaped the way our department identifies long-range actions to addresses recreation needs and deficiencies.

National Park Service Pacific West Region - (510) 817-1302.

#### The Ingenuity Award

**Abel Diaz**, of Malibu, Angeles District Sector Maintenance Staff, Los Angeles

He formulated a cost-effective plan to repair a 40-year-old chain-link fence that borders Los Encinos State Historic Park in Encino with a commercial parking lot. While he contracted out the installation, he was able to complete most of the project in-house, saving the department thousands of dollars. He found the complete chain link fence material at Los Angeles State Historic Park where it was no longer needed for an interim project. He then obtained labor for fence removal and site preparation by getting help from the entire maintenance staff. The end result is a secure site to enhance community events held within the park.

Angeles District - (818) 880-0360.

(more)

**Special Commendations** will be presented to the following teams and individuals:

**The Department Housing Team**

Members of the department's Park Operations and Administrative Services offices:

**Laura Aguon**, Sacramento

**David Barraza**, Woodland

**Val Bradshaw**

**Giz Bueno**, Elk Grove

**Carl Drake**

**Trayce Gilkey**

**Caryn Gordon**

**Dee Kirschman**, Roseville

**Margie Popoff**, Sacramento

**Karl Poppelreiter**, Pollock Pines

**Doug Purdy**, Roseville

**Janene Woolley**, Orangevale

The team will be recognized for their work on behalf of employees residing in state owned housing. In the past year the team has completed the operations manual for department housing, which passed division level review and Department of Personnel Administration review.

Park Operations Office - (916) 653-4272,

Administration Office - (916) 653-0528.

**Dan Carroll**, of Bolder Creek, Water and Sewage Plant Supervisor for the Santa Cruz District, will be recognized for his work to ensure that the department's \$2.5 million Wastewater Project will receive all the necessary upgrades needed to be in compliance. He has also researched designs that provide alternatives to improve the process of wastewater treatment.

Santa Cruz District - (831) 335-6318.

**Ken Wilbur**, of Escondido, Chief Armorer, Retired Annuitant with the department's Northern Buttes District in Oroville, will be recognized for his work as the State Parks' first armorer. As lead firearms instructor, he identified a cost savings in training himself to maintain weapons, rather than have the department contract out for such services. After showing the need for the program, the department began to send others through the necessary schooling to become an armorer.

Twenty-five years ago he took it upon himself to create a Firearms Inspector Manual and class and has coordinated the classes at the William Penn Mott Jr. Training Center. Because of his efforts, there are currently 13 armorers and 64 active firearms inspectors throughout the department. Now, all departmental weapons, including semi-automatic pistols, shotguns, and rifles are inspected in house once a year and replaced as necessary.

Northern Buttes District - (530) 538-2200.

**Curt Lawrence**, Park Maintenance Mechanic with the department's San Diego Coast District, will be recognized for his contributions to the district's interpretive programs. In addition to his regular park maintenance duties, he took it upon himself to develop an Astronomy Program that has benefited both school age children and adults from neighboring urban areas. At first, he used his own equipment. To keep the program growing, he has developed partnerships with groups like the San Diego River Park Joint Powers Authority, the San Diego Astronomy Association, and the Oceanside Photo and Telescope. Palomar Community College has added his program it to their curriculum as extra credit. As the program continues to expand, new ideas and partnerships are becoming established that will allow even more expansion in the coming years.

San Diego Coast District - (619) 688-3260.